

SPEECH

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OF

HON. LAWRENCE M. KEITT,

OF SOUTH CAROLINA,

ON THE

ACQUISITION OF CUBA.

DELIVERED

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

JANUARY 19, 1859.

WASHINGTON:
PRINTED BY LEMUEL TOWERS.
1859.

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The House being in Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union, and having under consideration the President's Annual Message—Mr. KEITT said:

MR. CHAIRMAN: The expediency of acquiring Cuba has been brought prominently before us in the recent annual message of the President. For more than thirty years, the instincts of the people of the United States have gathered around that island, and have exacted from different Administrations assurances of its conquest or purchase in certain political or social contingencies. That its acquisition is surrounded with embarrassments, is true; but it would be strange if any great object in life was attained without some risk or sacrifice.

Is the importance of Cuba to us commensurate with the efforts necessary to obtain and hold it? The answer to this inquiry will result from an examination into its geographical position, its resources, and its political and commercial connection with this country.

What is its geographical position? A glance at the map will show you that Cuba is within easy reach of the coast of Florida—situated between that State and the peninsula of Yucatan. It is the gate to the Gulf of Mexico, and commands both it and the West India seas. It is so propitiously planted, that, in the hands of a strong naval Power, it would make the Gulf of Mexico a *mare clausum*. Thus it keeps ward and pass over our commerce from New Orleans to New York, and from New York and our other ports, through the Isthmus transit, to our possessions on the Pacific coast. And what is the value of that commerce? It already reaches \$50,000,000 annually, and is enlarging with such rapid strides that the resources of arithmetic will ultimately fail to compute it. One of the richest and fairest regions of the earth, too, uses the Gulf of Mexico as an outlet for its productions. The Gulf is the reservoir of the Mississippi river and all its magnificent tributaries; and hence it receives the almost fabulous commerce of the region drained by these. The country thus drained, is equal to half of Europe in extent, covering twenty-five degrees of latitude and thirty-five of longitude on the great circles of the globe. It extends from the summit of the Alleghany to the summit of the Rocky Mountains, embracing climates of every variety, and productions of every kind. Already nearly ten millions of people inhabit it. What intellect is audacious enough to predict how numerous its population will yet be? The highways of commerce, too, are changing, and the hoarded wealth of the East, now startled from the sleep of centuries, will, in its transit to the West, cover the waters of the Gulf of Mexico. You may unite the Atlantic and Pacific shores with bands of iron, but this commerce will seek the Gulf; for water is the master of commerce.

The geographical position of Cuba is also important to us in a military point of view. Mr. Stevenson, in 1837, while Ambassador at the Court of St. James, in a letter to Mr. Forsyth, Secretary of State, said that—

“The possession of Cuba by a great maritime Power would be little less than the establishment of a fortification at the mouth of the Mississippi, commanding both the Gulf of Mexico and Florida, and consequently the whole trade of the western States, besides deeply affecting the interest and tranquility of the southern portion of the Union.”

Mr. Buchanan, while Secretary of State, used the following language in his instructions to Mr. Saunders, in 1848:

"Cuba, in the possession of Great Britain, or any strong naval Power, might prove ruinous both to our foreign and domestic commerce, and even endanger the union of the States."

John Forsyth said, in 1822, while at the Court of Madrid, that "the possession of Cuba gave the command of the Gulf of Mexico." Mr. Adams, in 1823, in his instruction to Mr. Nelson, says:

"Its [Cuba] commanding position with reference to the Gulf of Mexico and the West India seas, &c., gives it an importance in the sum of our national interests with which that of no other foreign territory can be compared."

Lieutenant Dahlgren, an accomplished officer of the Navy, in his report on fortifications, says:

"The true and only key, however, to the defence of these shores, and to the immense interest there collected, is the Havana. The island to which it belongs enters its western extreme in the Gulf, leaving but two passages for vessels, so narrow as to be commanded with the greatest facility; these are the great thoroughfares of trade and the mail steamers from New Orleans to California and New York. Hence if the use of the Havana be even at the disposal of an enemy while in the hands of a neutral Power, each and all of these interests could be with difficulty defended, even by a superior naval force, and never guaranteed against severe losses. While from it, as a United States port, a squadron of moderate size would cover the southeast and Gulf coasts, protect the foreign and inshore traders, and secure the lines from New York or New Orleans to the Pacific States by way of the Isthmus, its occupation would necessarily be the object of every expedition, military or naval, preliminary to any attempt on the southern trade or territory."

The importance of the acquisition of Cuba, in a military point of view, is somewhat diminished by the application of new motive power to vessels, and the consequent modification of the system of naval warfare. But still it is of great use as a muniment of protection to our southern coasts and our inshore traders.

The expediency of acquiring Cuba is also connected with the question of her resources. What are they? The Island of Cuba runs from east to west through its main extent, and is computed to be some seven hundred miles in length, with a maximum breadth of seventy-nine miles, and a minimum one of twenty-three miles. Its area is variously estimated between forty thousand three hundred and eighty-eight and thirty-four thousand two hundred and thirty-three square miles. Of the thirty million seven hundred and forty-one thousand acres included in the superficies of the island, there are not more than eight million under cultivation. This computation is founded upon the authority and figures of Arboleya's work on the Island of Cuba.

The main agricultural productive energies of Cuba turn upon the cultivation of the suga-cane, coffee, tobacco, vegetables, and fruits, together with the breeding of cattle, under our generic name of stock. The productions are the result of the cultivation of sugar estates—in number, 1,485, of which 893 are worked by steam; coffee plantations, 1,813; tobacco plantations, 1,102; fincas, or grazing-farms, 9,930; estaneias, or rural forms, 25,292. Arboleya, in his tables for 1852, enumerates the productions of Cuba for that year as follows:

Gross produce of sugar-house.....	\$24,000,059 78
Coffee.....	2,576,000 00
Tobacco.....	3,963,000 00
Other products (of all kinds) fruits, etc.....	4,850 000 00
Potatoes and beans.....	165,000 00
Forage (green).....	24,000 00
Classified and appraised fruits.....	548,000 00
Other incidental fruitage.....	16,200 00
Sugar canes (for market).....	600,000 00
Casava (sort of hominy).....	36,000 00
Starch.....	30,000 00
Forage (dried).....	7,515,000 00
Cotton.....	800,000 00
Cocoa.....	15,000 00
Rice.....	750,000 00
Sago.....	30,000 00
Palma Christa oil.....	40,000 00
Exported wood and timber.....	300,000 00
Madder.....	80,000 00
Consumption of home timber (estimated).....	1,000,000 00
Wood for fuel.....	1,000,000 00
Mineral coal.....	280,000 00
Straw hats.....	150,000 00
Other products not calculated.....	180,522 00
Total agricultural products of the year.....	53,014,000 78

The total animal products of the same year, (1852,) he enumerates as follows: For the bovine races, \$20,652,732; for the equine races, \$7,667,010; for other animals, \$5,247,350: total, \$33,567,092.

A more reliable exponent, however, of the wealth of Cuba, will be found in an examination of the imports and exports of the island. The following is an authentic table for the year 1853:

	<i>Imports.</i>	<i>Exports.</i>	<i>Total.</i>
Spain.....	\$7,756,905	\$3,298,571	\$11,055,776
United States.....	6,719,733	12,131,095	18,850,828
England.....	6,195,921	8,322,835	14,518,757
France.....	2,177,222	3,293,389	5,470,611
Hanseatic Towns.....	1,115,940	1,474,018	2,589,959
Belgium.....	993,511	466,306	1,464,817
Spanish American States.....	1,677,476	514,831	2,192,308
Denmark.....	485,422	403,085	888,508
Netherlands.....	88,876	246,661	335,538
Italy.....	69,022	651,275	720,298
Sweeden and Norway.....	47,756	16,309	64,065
Russia.....		253,688	253,688
Austria.....		138,036	138,036
Warehouse.....	457,010		457,010
	<hr/> \$27,789,800	<hr/> \$31,210,405	<hr/> \$59,000,205

But large as these tables are, they do not represent the full commercial transactions of the island. To prove that the actual value of the commerce of the island reaches a higher figure than that stated above, it is sufficient to say that it does not include the amount represented by the introduction of slaves; nor is allowance made for the system of bribery in universal use among the fiscal agents of the Government. Saco, the best informed Cuban whom I know, sets down the number of slaves clandestinely introduced, at ten thousand a year. These, at \$400 each, the minimum price, represent a commercial transaction of \$4,000,000 per annum.

The general system of smuggling, which is notoriously known to exist in the ports of Cuba, and the equally notorious tendency to willful and convenient blindness on the part of the fiscal agents, warrant the best informed writers in calculating the amount cut off from the lawful revenue at one-fourth of the whole amount; or, in round numbers, at \$17,000,000.

Now, the official returns give, for imports and exports, a basis of commercial transactions, reaching the sum of \$59,000,000, adding to which the probable \$21,000,000, represented by the trade in slaves, the process of smuggling, and the briberies of contraband; we have a fair hypothesis of a total commerce, amounting to \$80,000,000. Yet a large number of people go further, and maintain a still bolder opinion. Some think that the commercial transactions of Cuba reach the *bona fide* amount of \$100,000,000 per annum. They assert upon a calculation on the duration of a slave's life and labor in Cuba, and the demands of the plantations and smaller farms, that more than ten thousand slaves are introduced every year.

They also contend that the necessities of life introduced by Spanish vessels represent nineteen and one-half per cent.; that the less useful articles by the same vehicle, represent twenty-three and one-half per cent. By foreign vessels, that the former stand at twenty-seven and one-half per cent. and the latter at thirty-three and one-half per cent. The productions of Spain, under the foreign flag, pay fourteen and one-half per cent., whilst the same articles, under the national flag, pay but seven and one-half per cent. In addition to which there is, in every case, a *balanza* or equilization duty of one per cent. They consider the *ad valorem* duties of the tariff as exorbitant; especially as the appraisements of that tariff are frequently twice as high as the actual original price. The necessary consequence is, that many articles of merchandise are held to pay to the custom-house eighty, one hundred, or even one hundred and twenty per cent. on its value under the color of entrance duty in the island. Such abuse in the administration of the government, they maintain, compel the most honorable merchants to resort to smuggling and fraud. There is not, therefore, due accuracy in the returns of the Government.

The resources of Cuba are daily increasing, too, under the impetus of improved communications. A web of railroads is spreading over the island; and, under their inspiration, higher energies are awakened, new enter-

prises stimulated, and vast accessions of wealth introduced. There are three hundred and eighty-six miles of railroad completed, or under contract, and intercommunication is now easy throughout the western department of Cuba. The eastern and central departments are still almost inaccessible; but, they, too, are now trembling under the march of events, and the almost impossibilities of communication will soon yield to the spirit of civilizing improvements. How great the wealth which will follow in the track of these facilities, our western regions attest. So great are the resources of Cuba now, and under the double influence of increased communications, and the established ascendancy of law and order, their argumentation in the future is almost unlimited.

The political and commercial connection between Cuba and the United States is of great importance, and cannot be safely overlooked in the calculations of our policy. The traditions of the Republic for almost half a century, and the lineal and unbroken policy of each succeeding Administration, for more than thirty years, attest the delicacy and importance of this connection. The leaders of all parties and all Administrations of the United States, have agreed to the importance of acquiring Cuba, and have declared that this Republic would not allow the transfer of the island from Spain to any other European power. So highly did the Government value the political connection between Cuba and the United States, that John Quincy Adams, in 1823, while Secretary of State, said, in his instructions to Mr. Nelson, then Minister to Madrid, that the island was necessary, even to preserve the Union.

Mr. Everett, in a confidential dispatch to the Secretary of State, in 1827, said he had informed the Spanish Minister of State, "that it was with the United States a *settled principle* that the island (Cuba) must in no event pass into the possession or under the *protection* of any European Power other than Spain."

Mr. Van Buren, in 1829, in his instructions to Mr. Van Ness, said:

"The Government of the United States has always looked with the deepest interest upon the fate of those islands, but particularly of Cuba. Its geographical position, which places it almost within sight of our southern shores, and, as it were, gives it the command of the Gulf of Mexico and the West India seas, its safe and capacious harbors, its rich productions, the exchange of which, for our surplus agricultural products and manufactures, constitutes one of the most extensive and valuable branches of our foreign trade, render it of the utmost importance to the United States that no change should take place in its condition which might injuriously affect our political and commercial standing in that quarter."

Mr. Stevenson, in 1837, in his letter to Mr. Forsyth, said that, in confidential conversation with Lord Palmerston, he had reminded him of the declaration of our Minister to the French Government, in 1826, "that the United States could not see with indifference Porto Rico and Cuba pass from Spain into the possession of any other Power."

In 1840, Mr. Forsyth, then Secretary of State, instructed Mr. Vail, our Minister to Spain, in these words:

"The United States have long looked with no slight degree of solicitude to the political condition of the Island of Cuba. Its proximity to our shores, the extent of its commerce with us, and the similarity of its domestic institutions with those prevailing in portions of our own country, combine to forbid that we should look with indifference upon any occurrences connected with the fate of that island. The Spanish Government has often been apprised of the wishes of the United States, that no other than Spanish domination should be exercised over it, and scarcely need be told that our policy, in that respect, has undergone no change."

In the same dispatch he says, in relation to the occupation of Cuba by Great Britain, in either of the two modes which he suggested as likely to be resorted to by the latter Power:

"Whether attempted to be brought about by one or the other of the means alluded to, or by any other process, the United States can never permit it. The Spanish Government is to bear in mind this fixed resolution on our part, and be given to understand that it is taken upon long and mature deliberation, and at all costs, to govern the conduct of the United States."

Again, he says upon this subject:

"Should you have reason to suspect any design, on the part of Spain, to transfer voluntarily her title to the island, whether of ownership or possession, and whether permanent or temporary, to Great Britain or any other Power, you will distinctly state that the United States will prevent it at all hazards, as they will any foreign military occupation for any pretext whatsoever."

Mr. Webster, in a confidential dispatch to General Campbell, United States consul at Havana, in 1843, said:

"The Spanish Government has long been in possession of the policy and wishes of this Government in regard to Cuba, which have never changed, and has been repeatedly told that the United States never would permit the occupation of that island by British agents or forces upon any pretext whatsoever."

In 1844, Mr. Upshur, in his instructions to Mr. Irving, said:

"In the event that Spain shall so far yield to the pressure upon her, as to concede to Great Britain any control over Cuba, the fact will necessarily have an important influence over the policy of this Government."

Mr. Buchanan, in 1848, in his instructions to Mr. Saunders, thus defined the position of the United States in respect to Cuba:

"But we can never consent that this island shall become a colony of any other European Power. In the possession of Great Britain or any strong naval Power, it might prove ruinous both to our domestic and foreign commerce, and even endanger the union of the States. The highest and first duty of every independent nation is to provide for its own safety; and acting upon this principle, we should be compelled to resist the acquisition of Cuba by any powerful maritime State, with all the means which Providence has placed at our command."

Mr. Marcey, the late Secretary of State, in his instructions to Mr. Buchanan in 1853, said:

"For many reasons, the United States feel deeply interested in the destiny of Cuba. They will never consent to its transfer to either of the intervening nations, or to any other foreign State. They would regret to see foreign Powers interfere to sustain Spanish rule in the Island, should it provoke resistance too formidable to be overcome by Spain herself."

To Mr. Soulé, he says:

"While the United States would resist, at every hazard, the transference of Cuba to any European nation, they would exceedingly regret to see Spain resorting to any Power for assistance to uphold her rule over it. Such a dependence on foreign aid would, in effect, invest the auxiliary with the character of a protector, and give it a pretext to interfere in our affairs, and also generally in those of the North American continent. In case of collision with the United States, such protecting Power would be in a condition to make nearly the same use of that Island to annoy us as it could if it were the absolute possessor of it."

I will only add the testimony of Mr. Jefferson. In a letter to Mr. Monroe, dated 24th of October, 1823, he says:

"I candidly confess, I have ever looked on Cuba as the most interesting addition which could ever be made to our system of States. The control which, with the Florida point, this island would give us over the Gulf of Mexico, and the countries and isthmus bordering on it, as well as those whose waters flow into it, would fill up the measure of our political well being."

Thus have the efforts of successive Administrations and the resources of diplomacy concurred to illustrate the political importance of the acquisition of Cuba.

Our commercial connection with the island is no less suggestive and imposing. The sum of our commercial transactions with Cuba, in 1853, amounted, in round numbers, to \$19,000,000, as derived from the returns of the fiscal agents of Spain in the island. It has been steadily increasing since then; and with the fetters struck from our commerce with her, no one can calculate the point to which it would ascend. Nor is this commerce limited to any portion of the Confederacy; every interest and every State are embraced in it.

There were imported into Cuba, in 1853, the following schedule of articles, with their value according to the revenue tariff:

Provisions.

Liquors and wines.....	\$2,831,841 00
Meats (salt, jerked, &c.).....	1,625,657 00
Groceries	80,545 08
Fruits.....	275,340 77
Grains.....	4,199,978 00
Fisheries	599,285 05
Other provisions.....	1,765,624 00

Manufactures.

Cotton shirtings and stuffs	\$3,080,874 00
Linens and cloths	2,198,592 00
Woolens	487,180 08
Silks.....	583,145 02
Furs	703,802 01

Miscellaneous.

Timber and building materials	\$1,868,960 00
Metals	586,020 08
Cattle	39,890 04
Railroad materials	273,401 07
Sugar-house and engine materials	496,163 05
Articles not included in the preceding divisions	6,098,876 00

Thus Cuba imported in 1853, provisions to the value of \$11,378,270; manufactures, \$7,053,622; and other articles, \$9,277,900.

Can any one look over this schedule of imports and say that every interest and every State in the Union is not deeply interested in the trade with Cuba? Have the South and West no interest in the twenty millions of provisions and metals and lumber annually imported? Have the North no interest in the seven millions of manufactures annually carried into the island? Of the whole importation, amounting to \$27,789,800, the United States contribute \$6,719,733, or within a fraction of one fourth.

We are deeply interested, too, in the exports from Cuba. These, in 1853, amounted in value to \$31,210,405; of which the United States received \$12,131,095, or more than a third. In that year the following were the chief exports from the island:

Brandy or Rum (pipes)	14,294
Cotton (pounds)	138,623
Sugar (boxes)	1,657,192
Coffee (arrobas of 25 pounds)	442,730
Wax (arrobas)	45,948
Mahogany and other woods, value in dollars	448,434
Molasses and battery sirups (hogsheads)	303,331
Leaf tobacco (pounds)	8,039,797
Cigars (thousands)	237,350

These are articles which cheer the homes of every grade of population within the limits of the Republic. Smite Cuba from the geography of the world, and how much of comfort would be abstracted from the people of every portion of our Confederacy?

But it is not alone in the articles of export and import that Cuba concerns us. We are deeply interested in the mode in which commerce is conducted. Whence come the vessels in which these productions are carried from one port to another? The following table gives a significant answer, and tells the interest we have in it: Brazilian 2; Italian 6; Russian 7; Austrian 8; Spanish American 13; Prussian 17; Sweedish and Norwegian 17; Danish 20; Netherlands 24; Belgian 45; Hanseatic Towns 57; French 126; English 348; Spanish 901; United States 2,307. Out of a total of 3,918 merchant vessels engaged in 1853 in carrying the exports and imports of Cuba, the United States contributed 2,307. The total amount of tonnage for that year was 713,330. The tonnage of the Spanish vessels was 162,877; of foreign vessels 550,453. The proportion of the United States can only be approximated, as there are no complete data. According to the returns made to the Treasury Department, the commerce of the United States with Cuba for 1851 and 1852 was carried on in shipping, rated as follows: Cleared the United States, American vessels, 254,018 tons; foreign, 29,703. Entered the United States, American vessels, 249,307, tons; foreign, 33,030 tons. Thus deeply implicated in our commerce with Cuba is this large and increasing branch of industry.

The geographical position, resources, and political and commercial relations of Cuba with the United States, thus unfold the importance of acquiring the island. That there are drawbacks I readily acknowledge; but are they superior to the advantages? The character of these drawbacks will be seen from an examination into the character of the population, the interior economy of the island, and the attitude of foreign Powers. Cuba is divided into three departments; the western, central, and eastern. The population of the western department, according to the latest estimates, numbers: whites, 225,500; free colored, 88,300; slaves, 320,500. The middle or central department: whites, 153,000; free colored, 42,500; slaves, 50,500; and the eastern department: whites, 87,060; free colored, 74,770; slaves, 65,100. These tables give an aggregate of population: whites, 465,560; of free colored, 205,570; of slaves, 436,100. The total population, 1,107,230. There are conflicting statements,

but they do not vary very materially. The American Statistical Annual for 1852 put the population at 1,218,130; thus sub-divided: whites, (native and European,) 605,560; free colored, 205,570; slaves, 436,100.

In 1775, the population of the United States, without the guide of a census, was estimated at fully 3,000,000. In that year the population of Cuba was 170,370. Our last census, in 1850, shows our population to be 23,000,000, in round numbers. According to the indications of bills of mortality, and the working of the principles on which the new science of social statistics is based—all of them controlled by the laws of modern hygiene, as well as of political economy—Cuba, with a deduction for the intrusive addition of our emigrant laws to our own population, and by the rule of proportion, should show, for the period we have traversed, an increase of population amounting to 1,303,333.

This population is distributed under three divisions, fenced round with strong distinctions. The lowest division consists of the colored population, the large majority of which are slaves. The second is made up of free men; but men who represent the most motley and heterogenous compounds imaginable in the class of hybridism. A score of antipodal castes; a score of conflicting human elements; a score of clashing, not blending characters, and types, *de facto* constitute this Cuban social organization, in which the European Spaniard rudely taboos the natives and owners of the soil, and claims and exercises precedence over the disinherited *filius terræ*, and even over the foreigners, protected by pretended treaty stipulations, and settled in the island, with their family admixtures of every degree of parentage. The third, and what they call the "hierarchy"—the highest class of society in the order of rank and station—is composed of the large landholders, the wealthiest merchants, and the principal functionaries of the colonial government. Most of these—Creoles in a large number excepted—move in perfect accord with, and due subservience to, the political views, intents, and interests, of Spain.

It is objected that the number of free negroes in the island would make its incorporation into our Confederacy troublesome, if not dangerous. It is yet to be revealed that the African can withstand the domination of the anglo-Norman race; or that he will not readily lapse into appropriate submissiveness. If Cuba were acquired, this population would be tractable and safe, or its residence in the island terminated. In no event could it occasion serious social disturbance. No tenable objection can be derived from the laws which regulate slavery in Cuba. No matter how stringent, or even savage, they may be, they would immediately be relaxed, under the influence of our system. It is a distinctive peculiarity of the anglo-Norman race that it fixes its impress upon every people with whom it comes into contact. This is, in an eminent degree, the peculiarity of the people of the United States. Through the living entail of blood they have inherited the essential elements of character which distinguished each subdivision of the Caucasian race; and thus they assimilate others to them with greater facility. Under the alchemy of this influence, our system of slavery would easily be substituted for that of the Spanish in Cuba.

But is the system of slavery in the island as severe and barbarous as it is often represented to be? In speaking of the servile population of Cuba, the Chevalier Lobé, with the experience of twenty-five years residence in the island, says:

"The condition of the slave at the present day is incomparably better than it was a few years ago. Indeed, this *minor-in-law* is positively better clad, fed, and treated in the colony than he ever had been before. The obvious interest which the master feels in his preservation, increasing in proportion with the difficulty of fraudulently introducing his brethren, has resulted in the fact, that the physical condition of the slave is infinitely more comfortable in Cuba, more humane in fact, than that enjoyed by white men, so styled free, though they may be crowded in the manufacturing dungeons, set in motion by steam, over the civilized world."

This is the testimony of a European, a high public functionary in Cuba, and one imbued with all the prejudices which may be legitimately ascribed to one of his class, against the institution of negro slavery.

The interior administration of the island interposes no difficulties to its acquisition, but rather facilities for it. The administration of justice, even at the present day, is a miserable farce. There are tribunals to inquire into the concerns of those who have the exclusive right of resorting to them—such as the military, the provincial militia, the seamen, the officers of the fisc, the post office, the clergy, the nobles, and the individuals belonging, *ad honorem*, to the

royal household of Spain. Thus justice is subservient to the titled and wealthy, while the obscure and indigent are the victims of oppression. The power of the Captain General also runs through all the interior administration of the island. During the period of his authority he enjoys, from Spain, the rank of field marshal, as well as the dignity of the vice royalty. Consequently both the exchequer and the navy of the island are under his control, although there are both an admiral and an intendant appointed nominally to manage under him.

The central authority of the island is now but a modification of what was formerly the ancient office of the Captain General, whilst his secretaryship has been converted into a real government machine, which extends over the whole of Cuba. In consequence of this change, the civil secretary general is the soul of the great administrative institution, whilst the military secretary, who was formerly his superior in the official hierarchy, has *de facto* sunk below his confrere, and takes cognizance of none but military affairs, or of such as are directly connected with his department.

The result of this state of things is, that the civil secretary general is a sort of president of the Cuban cabinet, having under his control the heads of divisions, erected into ministers for the various branches of the administration confided to them. At the apex of this organization is the Captain General, *the supreme head of the State*, without whose positive will nothing can be decided and nothing performed in the colony. Like his sovereign, he has the right of pardon to felons, &c., condemned by the tribunals of the country, and of putting his *veto* even on such royal ordinances as he may deem detrimental to public interest. Indeed, he is so far and so thoroughly the representative of the sovereign power, that he is invested with the prerogative of the *alter ego*, and, like her Catholic Majesty, possesses the power of estopping the action of the laws that control the Castilian monarchy whenever, in his wisdom, he may deem it expedient temporarily to suspend their course. And yet, if we happen to have the slightest difficulty with the insular administration; if the innumerable abuses which daily grow out of its action or decisions should press upon our honor or our interests, this *supreme* representative of the supreme authority of Spain has no power to abate the abuse, safeguard the honor, or indemnify the interests. "We have nothing to do with this," is the answer given to American representatives; "you must go to the mother Government" across the Atlantic, through the intricacies, the delays, and the subterfuges of foreign departments, the only resort left to us, for the redress of now accumulated wrongs.

Thus, the administration of justice is confined to the privileged, and the hierarchy of power excludes the large majority of the natives from distinction and authority. A moral phalanx of opposition, consisting of the planters and traders of the secondary rank, and many of the inferior office-holders, has thus been constituted; powerful through its numbers, talents, and energy—an opposition, however unuttered and unspoken, from the fact that they cannot command the voice of a press to comment on the doings of a superior authority, as dark, remorseless, and irresponsible as ever was the tribunal of the dreaded Ten within the limits of Venice. These, with the large body of the Creoles—the white children of the soil, who are excluded by the iron policy and the hoary despotism of Spain; the white sons of the soil, who are doomed to live undistinguished, with a brand and mark of inferiority on their brow, "unless they have learned to betray"—these are the progressives and revolutionists of the island; who, in bitterness of heart and brokenness of spirit, await some day of deliverance.

But the administration of the island illustrates its oppressiveness most signally in the expenditures of the public revenue. Authentic tables show that the receipts into the treasury of the island for 1849, 1850, 1851, and 1852, consisting of the revenue and special deposits, amounted to the sum of \$53,991,714. Of this sum, \$3,219,894 was expended in the cost of collection; \$1,271,167 in the cost of public worship; and \$626,713 for the administration of justice; while \$21,913,951 were expended for the support of the army, and \$7,122,976 for that of the navy. Can any one look at this table of expenditures and say that Spain holds Cuba otherwise than in the iron grasp of power? Her spies are in almost every household to catch the first whisperings of revolt, and she has

more than thirty thousand soldiers there to tread the people down into subjection. This is the administrative economy of the Island of Cuba. There is nothing, then, in the population or Government machinery of the island to seriously embarrass its acquisition.

Have we anything to apprehend from Great Britain and France in our efforts to acquire Cuba? We can acquire it only by one of two modes: purchase or conquest. If Spain would sell the island, the great Powers of Europe could not interfere. But will Spain sell Cuba? There is no probability that she will, because Cuba is one of her sources of revenue, especially for the maintenance of her navy, the support of her colonial defence, and the defrayal of her diplomatic and consular service on the continent of America. The great families of Spain, also, have large estates in the island, and her beggared nobility are sent there to repair their shattered fortunes. You must remember, too, the declaration of Luzuriaga, in the Spanish Cortes, that "Spain can never either alienate or sell Cuba under any conditions or terms, because such sale would be tantamount to the barter of her honor." Against sale, also, the traditions and the pride of Spain protest. Protest those traditions, still instinct with the grandeur of that period when the Spanish empire was so world-wide that Argensola, in dedicating his splended chronicles to the monarch, could with justice say: "I depose this work at the feet of your majesty, over whose dominions the sun never sets." Protests that pride, as haughty now as on the day when Grimaldi told the minister of victorious France, urging Spain to sell Louisiana to us: "The king, my master, is accustomed to conquer and defend territories at the point of the sword, but to sell them, never." No; Cuba will not come to us by purchase.

Can we acquire it out of the condition of purchase, without war with Great Britain and France? They have compacted with Spain to guaranty and maintain her sovereignty over the territory of the island; and the gathering of their navies in the waters of the Gulf and West India seas, indicate no disposition to recede from the guarantee. The proposition was made to us to enter into this compact, but it was rejected by Mr. Fillmore's administration. In connection with this question, we must also recollect this declaration made by a public functionary of the Netherlands, Chevalier Lobé, in 1856:

"In Europe, France and England already stand forth as visible instruments of Providence; for, united as one man, they have assigned bounds to the ambition of the Czar. *In America*, those Powers, as they have declared in the face of the world, will also maintain the principles of impartial and *severe* justice, shielding the weak against the violence and the attempts of iniquitous invaders."

As if in proof of this declaration, Lord Clarendon, about the same time, said in the British Parliament, in substance, "that action should not be circumscribed by Europe, but that such protective action, resolved upon by England and France, by virtue of their close and cordial alliance, should be extended over the whole globe." In view of this declaration of Lord Clarendon, Chevalier Lobé further says:

"We respectfully beg England and France, as also *those other nations, which secretly or publicly* have given in their acquiescence in those magnanimous sentiments, well to ponder the fate which the cabinets of St. Petersburg and Washington have in store for the nations of the Spanish race on the American continent."

But there are mysteries of policy which lie behind the stipulations of treaties and the declarations of ministers, and which shed light upon this inquiry. Louis Napoleon is striving to create and establish a splendid colonial empire by enslaving and binding together the West India Islands. To do this, he must hem in, or cripple the power of the United States; and this he hopes to accomplish through the coöperation of Great Britain. With a splendid tropical empire, he would be the rival of the United States in the markets of the world, and would clutch the sceptre now passing into our hands. With his power consolidated, and every region tributary to him, his arm would be invincible. Moscow has already been avenged in the Crimea; Waterloo would then find its day of retribution.

The policy of Great Britain in resisting our occupation of Cuba, is only explicable upon the theory of subserviency to France. In fifty years her vast colonial possessions in the East will be stricken from her grasp; and she cannot redress the balance of her power by increasing her empire on this continent.

Her restless and embroiling diplomacy, too, is fast arraying the world against her. During the last twenty years she seems to have even lost sight of the end of diplomacy, which is to keep up the relations of peace and ward off the chances of war. Especially is it its duty to smooth asperities; at least, not to press upon them. Reconciling interests with honor, and in fairness its object should constantly be to avoid, within human power, anything that may drive Governments to resort to the *ultima ratio*—the ever dangerous logic of warfare. The mind of every agent should be thoroughly imbued with the idea that a resort to force is the penalty of national wrong; and that it becomes lawful only when all peaceful efforts to vindicate the right and to secure redress have proved abortive.

But, is this theory realized in British diplomacy? How often do we find her agents not quenching the flames, but applying the incendiary torch? How many questions have arisen which the finger of British diplomacy has touched, for no other purpose, it would seem, but that of bristling it with difficulties? There are exceptions, it is true, and the United States cheerfully testifies to one in the person of the British Minister at Washington. He connects the present with the earlier past of British diplomacy, when its character and spirit were widely different, and its annals bore the record of high and brilliant names. But it is none the less true that England for a quarter of a century, has set up and pursued a system of armed diplomacy. Nor is it less true that she is arraying the world against her. We are her natural ally, and why should she resist our occupation of Cuba at the hazard of war? The answer can only be found in her cordial alliance with France, and her subservience to the latter Power.

And have we not causes of war with Spain sufficient to justify us in the judgment of history? Have not our rights been invaded; our honor touched, and our flag insulted, while all redress has been denied? Our commercial relations with the island are vital and complicated, and yet the system of its administration is so adjusted as to embarrass us at every point. Nor, while the present system of administration continues, is it possible to avoid difficulties. In consequence of our intimate relations with the island, and the special powers exercised by the Captain General, it would seem that in general matters of business, and in particular cases of emergency, approach to him should be conceded to our consular representative at Havana. And yet such is not his prerogative.

One of the long standing subjects of the just complaints of our Government, is the obstinate refusal to allow our consul direct access, in official intercourse, to the supreme authority of the colony.

If this be ever done, it is done *ex gratia*, and not in deference to a right secured to him by the comity of nations and our treaty compacts. I have said that the position of the Captain General over the island, is that of a supreme ruler over any other Government. By a system of inference, if not of parallel, he seems to think, that as the representative of one Government, accredited to another, does not directly address the chief of the State, but approaches him through the channel of his minister, so the consular agent of the United States has no right immediately to communicate with him; but that he must do so vicariously through the medium of his colonial secretary. And yet there seems to be a distinction made in behalf of the British consul, who, unless I greatly err, enjoys the special privilege of a direct official intercourse with his vice royalty.

But not only in the form and right of communication is this distinction made between our and other consular agents. It is likewise and offensively extended to the very title which our Government sees fit to invest its consular representative at Havana. In order to understand the injustice of a course so strikingly derogatory, both to the commercial importance and dignity of the United States, we must refer back to the growth of foreign commerce with the island of Cuba. It is barely thirty-four years since a public act of Ferdinand VII. opened that commerce to the world, in spite of the obstacles and intrigues of the commercial boards of the Peninsula. Previous to that period, the ports and the territory of the island had been walled up against the commercial contact of nations, under the unrelaxing rigors of a monopoly, solemnly as it was shamefully sanctioned by the congress of Utrecht. But with the prevalence of the more liberal spirit, and sounder views of such functionaries as Arango and Ramirez, England and France and the Netherlands, in 1824, and subse-

quently, pressed forward to this new avenue of trade, and by virtue of a comparative freedom of commerce, secured the privilege of sending and maintaining *consuls general* at Havana.

This privilege is to every other nation, and particularly the United States, formally and persistently denied. "We will," says Spain, "allow you to trade in our ports. We will, in our colonial territories, allow you to appoint guardians of the rights and of the property of your citizens; but this permission must be vouchsafed with such distinctions and discriminations as we may be pleased to impose. Your Congress may create the office of consul general for Cuba; your President, in the discharge of his duty, may commission a consul general for the 'ever-faithful' city; but your agent shall not come within its walls, he shall not receive his exequatur under any other title than that of plain consul. The higher title and broader prerogatives of the 'consul general' are intended, not for you, but for our royal cousins of France, England, and the Netherlands." *Sic volo; sic jubeo; stat pro ratione voluntas.*

Such, sir, would seem to be the import of the conduct of Spain translated into words. This implied insult to our importance and dignity is inflicted in the face of the fact that we stand higher than either England or France, and, indeed, higher than Spain herself, in our contributions to the prosperity of the island. The commercial transactions of Great Britain in 1853, carried on by three hundred and sixty-eight vessels, amounted to \$14,000,000; those of France, in one hundred and twenty-six vessels, contrived to halt up to \$5,000,000; those of the United States, represented by two thousand three hundred and seven vessels, swelled it to \$19,000,000. Yet Spain allows to the former a consul general, which may be an empty honor, but one for which, empty honor though it be, we ought to "cavil with her on the ninth part of a hair" as a matter of right. She allows it to them, while to us it is denied. She allows it to the Netherlands even, while to us it is denied. She allows it to the Netherlands, the whole value of whose annual commerce with the island falls far below the actual cost of many a one of the fifteen hundred sugar plantations which our enterprise and activity, through our consumption, make contributive to her treasury. She allows it to the Netherlands, with her imports of \$88,876, and her exports of \$246,661, making up the pitiful total of \$335,537, represented by twenty-four vessels, with an extravagant calculation of twenty-seven thousand two hundred tons; whilst she contemptuously refuses it to the United States, with their \$7,000,000 of imports and \$12,000,000 of exports, wafted to and fro by two thousand three hundred and seven vessels, with their two hundred and fifty-four thousand and eighteen tons of merchant shipping.

And how is this insulting discrimination made? Is it merely under a withholding of the comity of nations? Is it under the exercise of the municipal power, which every Government possesses, of giving a consular exequatur, for just such consular privileges as it shall choose to designate? Under none of these, sir, is this insult offered to a people whose rank in the hierarchy of nations it is now too late to question. But it is offered in direct and systematic violation of treaty compacts. The nineteenth article of the treaty of San Lorenzo, of the 27th of October, 1795, amply and conclusively provides for the case. That article stipulates that our consuls shall be put on the same footing with those of the most favored Governments. But, providentially for the cause of international obligations, Spain had parted, under the law of contingency, with her municipal rights, long before the privilege was actually extended to England, France, and the Netherlands. They never secured the individual prerogative of a consul general, until the opening of the colonial commerce in 1824; whilst we, sixty years previously in 1795, had stipulated for a franchise, which is now obstinately denied, not only to the requirements of our commercial, but denied also to the honor of our public character. Trifling as this question of the mere rank of a consul may be in the abstract, it points to an inherent relation with the pride and importance of our people. Individuals may hold off from the vindication of individual character and individual rights, and they may not suffer from the forbearance; but no people, especially that which is called the American people, dare overlook attempts at insult or indignity, and hope that its influence and its honor can escape unscathed.

And if, for these indignities and wrongs, we submitted our disputes with Spain to the arbitrament of the sword, and tore Cuba from her grasp, what

nation could rebuke us, or charge us with territorial spoliation? Could England do it? Are the annals of the world defaced? Has the story of the desolation and woes which have followed in her remorseless tread passed away from the memory of man? Have the records of her own high courts of impeachment, doing, at times, compulsory homage to justice, been destroyed? Have the shrieks of millions of victims ceased to appeal against the enormities of this habitual violator of all sanctities? Has the blood of those millions of victims, shed in the prosecution of her insatiate and still insatiable ambition, been to her a regenerating baptism, that has so washed away her political leprosy, that to us—to us, who have more than once foregone the integrity of our rights, that we might indulge the boast of generosity—that to us she should fling the night-shade imputations of unjustifiable acts of spoliation and gross and flagrant crime? We are the subverters of rights; we the oppressors of the earth; and England is the witness and judge of our guilt! She never robbed, pillaged, and murdered in every quarter of the globe. She never carried desolation on both sides of the Atlantic and Pacific waters. She never burnt Carthage, sacked St. Jago, and pillaged St. Domingo, in time of peace. Her sea-robbers and land-pirates, under secret commissions, never scattered terror along the coasts. They never, in their personality of free-booters, created a specific race of marauders, which the ignorant Spaniards converted into *filibusteros*—a name—her own name—which she now so generously confers upon those of us whose greatest wrong is to have followed her suggestive example. The waters of Deptford never witnessed the eongees and bowings of the Hawkinses and Drakes; touching with their red hands—red with the blood of despoiled thousands—the dainty fingers of the virgin Queen, or laying at her feet the crimson trophies of arson, murder, and theft. Oh, no; Americans alone are *filibusteros*; Americans alone are trampers of the rights of nations; alone agents of spoliation and perpetrators of crime. Heavens above! England mouthing “principles of justice between nation and nation, scrupulously observed!” and her officials again inaugurated in the Bay Islands’ encroachment. England imputing to us constructive spoliations, and her armaments crowding every sea in search of spoil and conquest? Is she oblivious, or mad, or both? Or, in charging us with the guilt of “spoliation and flagrant crime,” does she herself claim an easement for her virtue, in the example of the harlot of Holy Writ, who “eateth, wipeth her month, and saith, I have done no harm?” If England would rebuke us, she must burn up the history of the last three hundred years, stifle the cries of the pillaged East, and unloose the cincture with which she has bound the empire of the earth. Then, when her robes are cleansed from blood, her records unsullied by usurpation, and her fame assoilzied from stain, she may rebuke us for guilty ambition and territorial wrong.

But, it is not for the mere purpose of expansion that our hand must be laid upon Cuba; it is a stepping-stone in the pathway of our progress; and it must be ours, or we must stumble against it. The commerce of the world is bursting old barriers and hunting new outlets. Great Britain is binding the world in a cincture of little Gibaltars, as citadels of her power and safeguards of her commerce. Her hand is laid upon the rock of Perim; and she will raise it into a miniature Gibraltar to command the possible outlet of the Mediterranean through the Red sea, as she now holds the huge Gibraltar to master the inlet to the former waters. She is averse to the commingling of the blue waters of the Mediterranean with the red waters of the Erythrean sea through the canal of Suez; but her aversions do not extend to the commingling of the billows of the Atlantic with those of the Pacific through a like canal, joining San Juan del Norte with San Juan del Sur. By such an appliance she well knows our commercial interests, our Pacific possessions, and our future enlargements, are all to be affected. Instinct with this generous idea, she immediately modifies her system of geodetic surveys. Her geographical scruples are incontinently removed, and her hydraulic theories as rapidly changed. On the bare suggestion of a hungry French adventurer—whose name smacks eloquently of his instincts, one Monsieur Belly—Lord Malmsbury finds no difficulty in the construction of a Nicaraguan canal, though England strongly objects to the canal of Suez. But, as such an appliance is decidedly to affect our Pacific possessions, our general commerce, and consequently our enlarging prosperities, his lordship equally found that the protectorate of the canal by France, England, and Sar-

dinia, might not ungracefully come under the stipulations of the Clayton-Bulwer treaty—an instrument which, under the sincerest respect to the memory of the dead, I believe to be the best “springe to catch woodcocks” ever contrived by vulpine cunning on the one, and blinked by overweening confidence on the other, side of an international negotiation.

But, sir, I trust that both these splendid enterprises of science and energy will be accomplished in our age. I trust that this nineteenth century, which has inscribed the annals of Time with a record of gigantic fights among the nations of the earth, will witness the triumph of the work of civilization in the darker places of the western and of the eastern hemispheres. The genius of man, daily weaponed by new discoveries, is in our days a very conqueror, commanding creative means, attracting continents, and uniting seas. The Macedonian, whose arms changed the channels of the commerce of the world, once entertained the idea of restoring what, even in his days, had been the canal of Pelusium, which had linked the Red sea to the Nile, and then of establishing a communication with his city of Alexandria, which he had reared at once into a seat of learning and an emporium of commerce. Death balked him in his giant purposes.

In our day, I trust that the spirit of humanity, which is an undying spirit, will dare, in spite of all obstacles, through the triple power of science, wealth, and common sense, freely expressed, to restore Egypt to the civilizing arts of life which she once dispensed. There are holy crusades to be carried on, in peace, in behalf of human civilization, and they must have every facility and every way for their workings over the world. I trust, therefore, that that spirit, in very defiance of England's obstacles, will open the Isthmus of Suez to navigation, and shorten by one-half the way of the enlightened West to the barbaric East. But especially do I trust that, by the opening and fostering and the protecting at all hazards of the Isthmian highways, which the finger of God, within our own hemisphere, has irrevocably marked out for our tread, we shall still more reduce the distance that severs us from the Cathays and Taprobanas, the “Ormuz and Ind,” of which the instincts of the middle ages had dreamed, and which our own hardy and indefatigable explorers have settled into realities.

Still, I do not see how we may intervene in the question of Suez, save in the honest tribute of our wishes, and the investment of individual means.

But however we may shelter the matter under the hints of a Monroe doctrine, the naked and obstinate fact is, that we do not want, and we cannot allow, the European nations to come to this continent to cut through, or regulate, or protect *our* isthmuses. The transection of the Isthmus of Suez has been the subject of long and stormy Cabinet councils of all the Governments of Europe. For its execution, their unanimous consent had to be obtained. Ours, on which of them we may settle, are subject to no such condition. The same Providence, which, in its unsearchable decrees brought the American race to this continent; the same Providence which raised them from dependence into self-sustaining ability; the same Providence which had confirmed their political power, when the original colonists of this continent were compulsorily resigning theirs; that same Providence points out to us how we are to shape our system of development and exhaust our destiny of greatness. It points to the obvious ways of transit in our onward path, which nature and necessity, which the law of progress, the demands of commerce, and the requirements of civilization have forelaid for us upon the continuations of our own soil. It controls the convictions of every mind, and stirs up the echoes of every heart, and each echo answers in the words of the Lombard leader: “God has marked it out for me; woe be to him who touches God's gift to me!”

To achieve our destiny, the waters of the Gulf of Mexico must be *mare nostrum*. To this the traditions of the Republic—traditions that are the living testimony of the past, that can no longer speak otherwise for itself—and the necessities of progress, now conspire. The commerce of the world is breaking through old barriers and seeking new channels. Up to the beginning of the period within which we derived our colonial existence, and from which we strugglingly, yet not ignobly, rose into the dignity of a people whose voice is not unheeded in the councils of nations, Asia had been the great seat of trade; but its transactions, bound to the delays of a tedious and unsafe sea navigation

and land earriage combined, were mostly restricted to the southeast of Europe and the waters of the Mediterranean.

But the New World, the more obvious passage to the east, lay in the unexplored trackways of the west. From the western coast of Europe was that new world discovered, and from the period of this discovery it has reacted on the destinies of both Asia and Europe. From the days of Phenicia to those of Venice, at the time of the discovery of America, the Mediterranean sea, together with the land routes which joined it to the Arabian and Persian Gulf, had constituted the narrow space which limited the international trade of the world of the sixteenth century. Within that space civilization had, for thousands of years before, taken its roots. Mankind, within the measure of their resources, had then and there wrought wonders which the discovery of this continent, the peopling of its wastes, the planting of its colonies—especially the colonies of the Hollandish, French, and English stocks—are now re-producing, in broader forms, in farther reaches, and far brighter promises. But especially had Asia exercised an influence on the destiny of trade, which, with the discovery of our continent, passed away, never to be retrieved. The eager hand of Young America is, even at the present day, reaching to pluck the jeweled collar from the neck of her whom the earliest traditions greet as the dowager of the earth, and to plant upon her youthful brow the diadem which, with the primogeniture of birth, once proclaimed Asia the mistress of the commerce of the world.

Yes, sir; with the exception of India, galvanized into reëxistence by the calculating violence of England, and it may be China and Japan, lately startled into a new life, by the intrusions of the four most powerful nations of the west, Asia is buried in deepest lethargy, and its participation, once so active, in the operations of trade, has almost entirely ceased. Even has the southeastern extremity of Europe come within the influence of that torpor. On the very confines of the three known divisions of the world, which were once the most active theaters of thrifty-trade; those very confines were the highest development of commerce had been witnessed, and where it seemed destined to go on in unmeasured extent, ignorance, scantiness, and poverty, have been substituted for the energy and wealth which had marked them for the dwelling place of political power. With the discovery of this continent, sir, Italy, not subjugated like Greece, her foster mother in all the useful arts of social and political life, lost her preëminence and her prosperity in the commercial scale, when, with the discovery of America, the principal sources of that prosperity were suddenly closed. The very genius of her son was fatal to her, whilst the discoveries of his daring spirit brought her down from the height of that commercial preëminence.

With the mastery of commerce, (which she had held in her hands for nearly six centuries,) her other elements of greatness disappeared. Yet they merely disappeared in a change of place. Other fields for its resources were opening at the very time which marked her decay as the controller of the trade of the world, and heralded our advent into the family of nations, together with the history of our prosperity and commerce. Other theaters for its action had been prepared in the future colonies and States of the American continent. The sceptre of modern commerce was resigned by the reluctant hand of Italy; but resigned to be greedily snatched at by Portugal, Holland, and Spain, by which it was alternately swayed, until intrinsic causes of decadency, and a fatal combination of circumstances, put it in the hands of England; from which, with the declaration of our independence, we have wrested it for a perpetual heirloom in the great family of American States.